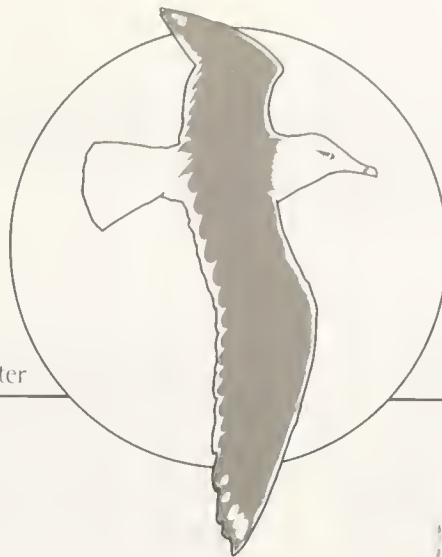


# The Gull

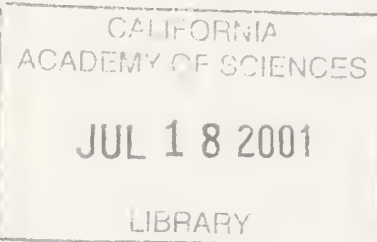


Golden Gate Audubon Society Newsletter

Volume 85 No. 7 July • August 2001

## Oh No, You Can't Go!

By Arthur Feinstein



On June 30, 2001, Alan Hopkins left the Board of the Golden Gate Audubon Society. What a loss to all of us on the Board and for the Chapter in general. As Golden Gate Audubon Society President for two years and Board member for many more, Alan has inspired us and helped make GGAS what it is today, one of the Bay Area's most respected conservation organizations.

As a birder, Alan has helped put San Francisco on the birding map. The SF Department of Recreation and Parks will shortly publish his map for Birding Golden Gate Park. His articles and photography in birding magazines, his field trips and lectures have made all of us aware of what a special place we live in.

Alan's knowledge of our local birds and their natural history has been a critical asset in our work to preserve habitat for our bird species. When someone wants to clear out brush or cut down trees, Alan has been there to say that the brush supports this or that bird species and a nuthatch or some other cavity-nester depends upon that tree.

Alan's willingness to take on contentious issues has never failed to amaze me. His ability to find answers to these issues that can bring opposing sides together plays an

important role in his successes. If we ever resolve the feral cat and unleashed dog issues it will be due in large part to Alan's efforts and his ability to come up with creative solutions.

Our Save the Quail Campaign is Alan's from start to present. He tracked the Quail, monitored their decline, sought answers and convinced all of us that a major effort was

necessary if Quail are to survive in San Francisco. He has been a major source of information to our scientific consultants. He and Ruth Gravanis have organized our Quail habitat restoration projects. If we have Quail in San Francisco ten years hence it will be due to Alan.

Alan embodies the ideal of an Audubon volunteer. Passionately devoted to birds and birding. Infecting everyone he meets with this enthusiasm. Incredibly knowledgeable on birding issues and spending long hours using this knowledge in defending the habitats upon which our birds depend.

Alan promises that he is not leaving us as a volunteer. All of us pray that this is true. Alan is one of those folk who cannot be replaced.

Thanks, Alan, for all of your time and effort. It makes all the difference.



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# People, Dogs, Birds, Habitat—the Search for the Peaceable Kingdom

A few years ago some folks undertook a search of the scientific literature to see what scientists have discovered concerning the impact humans have on wildlife. Not surprisingly every study, and they numbered over 400, found that human interaction with wildlife resulted in harmful impacts to wildlife to some degree. Often, that impact may be relatively minor. Just as often it can be quite serious.

A woeful example is that of a state forest preserve that had been closed to human access for many years and which harbored a rare forest turtle. One day they decided to open the forest to public access and within one year not a single turtle remained (the researchers hypothesized that many people had taken the turtles home as pets).

That we impact the natural world should not come as a surprise to any of us. We're an expansive species and we affect things. We're not bad; we're just very busy and clever. But we do have an impact.

This article is not being written in order to get us all depressed and thinking there's nothing we can do. Not at all. We just have to recognize that we have impacts on the natural world and as we live our lives, we need to take those impacts into consideration. Water conservation, recycling – all of these are our societal responses to this need for consideration. As we try to live in sympathy with our natural world we need to remember this message.

As Audubon members, we obviously care about our natural world and want to do all we can to preserve it. As just plain folk, we all want to live happy, comfortable, enjoyable

lives. For many of us pets, be they cats, dogs, fish or birds or other, are an important component of our life styles, bringing us joy and comfort.

But remember the adage, we have impacts. And by extension, so do our pets. Try as we might to pretend that our cat or our dog would not harm a hair of any wild creature or disturb any habitat, the truth is that they can and do. These are critters who do not historically belong to the ecosystem to which we introduce them and as a result they have impacts on that ecosystem and they are not usually friendly ones.

There is a large body of scientific literature on the impacts of cats on birds. There is a fairly large body of such literature on dog impacts. It is neither logical nor particularly fruitful to pretend that cats and dogs have no impact on wildlife species and their habitats. Rather, we need to develop societal mechanisms that allow us to have our pets while limiting their impacts on wildlife.

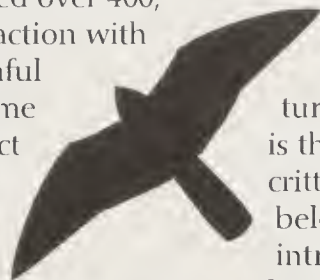
Recently there has been a lot of debate over whether dogs should be allowed to run unleashed at Fort Funston in San Francisco. The Golden Gate National Recreation Area has removed some of the site from public access and has begun to restore those acres to native vegetation. Part of the reason for this closure was to provide some protection for the Bank Swallow colony that nests in the cliff face of Fort Funston's sand dunes (Bank Swallows are a state listed species). Dog owners who have run dogs unleashed at the site have challenged this, saying that the dogs impact neither the cliffs nor the Bank Swallows.

Is it really credible to suggest that Bank Swallows nesting on a cliff face pay no attention to what happens directly above their heads? A critter's habitat includes all of the area in which they live, not just their nest. Our own Dan Murphy, who has been monitoring the Swallows for many years, relates the fact that the Swallows do feed above the cliff face.

At GGAS we are seeking a solution to this unleashed dog issue not through denial but through the search for win/win solutions. These don't come easy and sometimes don't come at all, but when you are lucky they can be attained. We think that there is an answer to the unleashed dog problem in San Francisco and elsewhere. It is not to deny the need for unleashed dog run areas. Nor is it to pretend that unleashed dog run areas don't have significant environmental impacts if located in wildlife habitats.

The answer is to find suitable dog run sites that will not impact sensitive habitat areas. Surely such places exist in San Francisco and elsewhere. Surely they do not have to be under freeways or in terribly unpleasant places. But neither do they have to be in the most beautiful and valuable habitat areas. We need to remember that we humans, as a species, have considerable impacts on nature. If we want to moderate those impacts we need to make room for nature and put aside some of our own desires.

Let's all get together and talk about our respective needs and find dog run areas that are welcomed by all parties.







# Field Trips Calendar

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## **Sunday, July 8, STRYBING ARBORETUM.**

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the front gate of the Arboretum (9th Ave. and Lincoln Way) for this regular first Sunday of the month half-day trip. The Strybing Arboretum is a delightful section of Golden Gate Park, with several "micro-habitats" attracting a varied array of resident, migrant and vagrant birds. Beginners and all others welcome. Leaders: Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna (415) 566-3241 and Harry Fuller.

## **Saturday-Sunday, July 28-29, YOSEMITE ALPINE ECOLOGY.**

See June Gull for details. Leader: George Peyton (510) 433-2600 week-days.

## **Sunday, July 29, PRESIDIO BIRDS.**

What species live in San Francisco's largest expanse of open space? Meet at 7:30 a.m. at Inspiration Point, just north of the Arguello Gate to the Presidio, to find out. Expect Hooded Orioles, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Pygmy Nuthatch, California Quail, Forster's Tern, Purple Finch. This is an excellent trip for beginners to meet our common coastal birds. The leader will also point out fall migrant traps to help you plan your fall birding. We will end by noon. Be prepared for possible cool coastal conditions and bring water. Leader: Harry Fuller (415) 668-8229 or [harryfuller@techtv-corp.com](mailto:harryfuller@techtv-corp.com)

## **Sunday, August 5, STRYBING ARBORETUM.**

For details, see July trip. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the front gate of the Arboretum (9th Ave. and Lincoln Way). Leaders: Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna (415) 566-3241 and Harry Fuller.

## **Friday-Monday, August 24-27, BACKPACKING TRIP IN LASSEN VOLCANIC NATIONAL PARK.**

See June Gull for details. Backpack in three miles for three nights of primitive camping. To avoid impact in fragile habitat, this trip is limited to 12 people. Leaders: David Rice and Robin Pulich. For details contact David Rice at (510) 527-7210 or [drice@jps.net](mailto:drice@jps.net).

## **Saturday, September 1, TILDEN REGIONAL PARK, Berkeley.**

Meet at 8 a.m. at the Nature Center parking lot for this half-day trip. Enter the park from either Canyon Drive (where Spruce meets Wildcat Canyon Rd.) or Shasta Rd., off Grizzly Peak Blvd. in Berkeley and follow the signs to the Nature Center at the north end of the park. We will explore Jewel Lake and other areas. We hope to see migrant warblers, vireos, flycatchers as well as resident birds. Beginners welcome. Leader: Rusty Scalf (510) 666-9936. [Rscalf@jps.net](mailto:Rscalf@jps.net)

## **Sunday, September 2, STRYBING ARBORETUM.**

For details, see July trip. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the front gate of the Arboretum (9th Ave. and Lincoln Way). Leaders: Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna (415) 566-3241 and Harry Fuller.

## **Wednesday, September 13, MINI-TRIP TO ALAMEDA SOUTH SHORE.**

Meet at 9:30 a.m. in Alameda at Broadway and Shoreline Drive. We will be looking for shorebirds and waterfowl. This trip often produces Clapper Rail and a dozen or more species of shorebirds. Bring lunch and a scope if you have one. Leaders:

Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 and Jean-Marie Spoelman.(\*)

## **Saturday, September 15, LAS GALLINAS SEWER PONDS, Marin.**

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the parking lot for this half-day trip. Take 101 north and exit at the Lucas Valley Drive/Smith Ranch Road off ramp. Go east on Smith Ranch Road to the end. Take a sharp left to the sewage treatment ponds, just before the county park. Drive past the headquarters to the parking lot on the left. We will see a variety of water birds, raptors, and who knows what in migration. Beginners welcome. Leader: Bob Lewis (510) 845-5001. [Rlewis0727@aol.com](mailto:Rlewis0727@aol.com).

## **Saturday, September 22, ARROWHEAD MARSH, Martin Luther King Regional Shoreline.**

Meet at 9:30 a.m. for this 3 hour trip. From Berkeley, take Hwy 880 to Hegenberger Rd. exit. Drive west to Doolittle and turn right. Turn right on Swan Way. Turn left after a block and take the dirt road to the last parking lot. Expect returning migrant shorebirds as well as local breeders, perhaps Clapper Rail. Leader Courtenay Peddle. (510) 552-8911 (before 8 p.m.) or [capeddle@there.net](mailto:capeddle@there.net)

Trips marked with a (\$) go to parks or other sites which require an entrance fee. Carpooling arrangements will be attempted by leader for trips marked with a (\*).

**Problems, etc.:** If you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, or **IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO LEAD A TRIP**, call Anthony Fisher, Field Trips Committee Chair, (510) 658-8769. [Loveisant@aol.com](mailto:Loveisant@aol.com).

# Saving Suisun Bay, Salmon and Just about Everything

**W**ell, not really everything but it sure is important. We, the Golden Gate Audubon Society as lead plaintiff, joined by the Marin and San Joaquin Audubon Societies as well as several fishing groups, have sued the State Water Resources Control Board over the State Water Board's adoption of decision D-1641. This is a water rights plan for the San Francisco Bay and Delta that provides the overarching guidance to determine how much freshwater enters the Delta, Suisun Bay and San Francisco Bay itself and how much will be diverted to agriculture and Southern California. This State Water Board Plan is sadly deficient and will result in increased freshwater diversions from San Francisco Bay and the Delta. The impacts of these diversions will be far-reaching and very harmful to native wildlife species.

As many of you are aware, freshwater diversions had reached such high levels in the 1970s, 80s and 90s that many native salmon species were listed as threatened or endangered, as were several other San Francisco Estuary fish species such as the Delta Smelt.

Another result of increased freshwater diversions was the change of Suisun Bay's brackish tidal marshes to salt marsh. Suisun Bay has 10,000 acres of tidal wetlands that are a rare type of wetland called brackish. These brackish wetlands are part salt marsh and part freshwater marsh because in Suisun Bay, ocean water tides bring in salt water while the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers bring in freshwater. Salt and freshwater regimes alternate and as a result the tidal marshes develop unique vegetation and faunal communities. The change from brackish to salt marsh

has drastic impacts on many species resident in Suisun Bay's marshes.

For example, Suisun Bay now has several endangered plant species. It also hosts a group of animals that are rapidly disappearing from the Bay Area; beaver, river otter and mink, for example. Of course, there are also a bunch of bird species that relish brackish marshes. The Suisun Song Sparrow's primary habitat is Suisun Bay's brackish marshes. Snowy Egrets, Black-crowned Night herons, American Bittern and quite a few duck species such as Northern Pintail, Cinnamon Teal and Northern Shovelers utilize these brackish marshes. As these marshes disappear so may these plant, bird and animal species.

Thanks to previous litigation, lead by the Golden Gate Audubon Society, the US EPA has established water quality standards for the Bay/Delta that require enough freshwater to ensure a doubling of native salmon populations and to ensure the preservation of Suisun Bay's brackish marshes.

The State Water Board decided to ignore these EPA standards when it set its own standards for fresh water flows into the Bay/Delta. We believe that by ignoring these EPA standards, and by establishing significantly weaker ones, the State Water Board's decision will result in too little fresh water entering the Delta and Suisun Bay. Salmon populations and Suisun Bay's brackish marshes and all the critters dependent upon them will suffer great harm.

As a result, we challenged this decision in court. At present, we have survived all challenges to our participation in this lawsuit and are about to go to trial on the merits. But first, we have to pay court costs. These

amount to about \$17,500. We have managed to raise that money from our own funds and from our co-plaintiffs, but that's a lot of money for us to spend and the costs may go far beyond this initial amount.

If you can, please consider a donation to Golden Gate Audubon to help us offset the cost of this expensive but essential lawsuit. We believe we have a very good chance of winning. We have to win. Your financial support will make it possible. Thanks. All donations are entirely tax deductible.

Donations can be sent to: Golden Gate Audubon Society  
2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G  
Berkeley, CA 94702.

Please make your checks out to Golden Gate Audubon.

If you have any questions, please call us at 510-845-2222. Thanks for your support.

## Panama, 2001-2002

The Latin America Committee of GGAS is preparing for two trips to Panama during the next winter season, the first to begin on December 8, the second in March - April. Both will include stays at the Canopy Tower and at the Cana Field Station in Darien National Park, as well as an optional trip to a Harpy Eagle territory in the Chagres National Park.

Additional information will be published in the next issue of The Gull. For an update, call Bob Risebrough at 510-549-2476 or at [pelecanus@igc.org](mailto:pelecanus@igc.org).



# Feathers High And Low: A Field Guide To The Birds Of Arizona, New Mexico, Southern California, And Southern Nevada

Texas A&M University Press, \$36.95 cloth; \$17.95 paper

At 282 feet below sea level, this harsh desert area of the Southwest is the lowest point in the continental United States. But despite its name, bird species such as the Western screech-owl, lesser nighthawk, house finch, and the rock wren abound. The Southwest also boasts the highest area—Mount Whitney, at 14,494 feet above sea level. This area, too, is a home to the brown-capped rosy finch, the American pipit, and other birds, making the area a haven for birders.

**Birds of the Southwest** by John H. Rappole provides 456 full-color photos of bird species plus detailed information on identification, habits, habitat preferences, voice, seasonal occurrence, and abundance and distribution of birds found in the deserts, coasts, and mountains of Arizona, New Mexico, southern California, and southern Nevada.

"The vast southwestern corner of the United States covers 520,000 square miles of some of the most spectacular scenery to be found anywhere in the world: mountains, deserts, seacoast, forest, prairie, and chaparral," Rappole writes. "One of the most accessible and rewarding aspects of that diversity is the region's more than 450 species of birds, as distinctive as the landscape."

For each of the species found in the Southwest, Rappole provides the bird's physical description and information on its voice, occurrence, and nesting habits, which allow amateur and professional birders alike to

scope out even the rarest species. Maps showing the bird's range and migratory movements accompany each entry.

Rappole also provides a chapter on land formations, climate, and habitats of the Southwest, including the marine and coastal waters, wetlands, grasslands, savanna, desert scrub, woodlands, and forests. Photographs of fifty major birding localities enhance the text, and Rappole also provides directions to more than four hundred of the Southwest's best birding sites.

With its complete coverage of avian abundance and distribution in all habitats of the Southwest, this field guide will allow both beginners and professionals a firsthand glimpse of the varied bird life of the region.

**About the author:** John H. Rappole is a research scientist with the Conservation and Research Center of the Smithsonian Institution's National Zoological Park, Front Royal, Virginia. He is co-author of **Birds of Texas: A Field Guide**, also published by Texas A&M University Press, and has written several other volumes on bird identification and migration.

**Birds of the Southwest** is available at stores or direct from Texas A&M University Press (800-826-8911 M-F 8-5 CT; secure online ordering at [www.tamu.edu/upress](http://www.tamu.edu/upress)).

## Do We Have Great Volunteers?

We sure do! As part of our on-going series of articles on our volunteers, we'd like to introduce you to Richard Bachenhimer. Richard has been working in the GGAS Office for nearly five years now. Every Wednesday afternoon he comes in and handles the phone calls and helps with the mailings. He also provides great insights and suggestions to our beleaguered Executive Director who can use all the help he can get.

In his youth, Richard was a Fulbright scholar and studied cultural

anthropology in Southern India. He fought in World War II and lost a leg. He returned to Berkeley (he went to school at



Cal.) and worked in real estate for many years. Richard understood the need for infill housing long before the environmental community caught up to him and recognized it as one part of the solution to sprawl.

Now, Richard watches birds, enjoys opera and the arts and helps Golden Gate Audubon. Richard is around the 80-year mark and is a living demonstration that Audubon volunteering keeps you young.

Richard, thanks for your help. It's volunteers like you who keep GGAS going.

P.S. If you, too, would like to volunteer give us a call at 510-845-2222. We have many different volunteer activities to choose among.

# Preliminary "Important Bird Areas" Now Available For Comment Online

With the help of dozens of experts throughout the state, Audubon-California has completed a list of nearly 300 potential Important Bird Areas ("IBAs"), representative of the wealth of bird diversity in the state. California's IBA program, modeled after similar efforts in other states (and in countries around the world), seeks to guide future bird conservation activities by drawing attention to critical habitats and regions for birds,

using criteria such as concentrations of sensitive species, large numbers of particular groups of birds (e.g., shorebirds) and the presence of rare and unique bird habitats. A list of preliminary IBAs for the state has been posted on Audubon-California's website for comment. If you have additions or suggestions, we hope to hear from you soon, as we are eager to finalize the list and to begin preparing accounts of each site for publication.

To view the list, go to: [Audubon-ca.org](http://Audubon-ca.org)

Once in the website, click on "Conservation" (left side, 4th item under "Web Pages"), then on "IBA Program" (top, far right).

For a hard copy of the preliminary IBAs, contact: Daniel S. Cooper Biologist, Audubon-California, The Audubon Center, 6042 Monte Vista St., Los Angeles, CA 90042; (323) 254-0252

## New Meeting Schedule To Take Effect This Fall

—Anne McTavish, Program Chair

There won't be a program in July or August, but please join us again in September for our monthly chapter meetings.

This year we are going to try something new: instead of alternating the meetings between San Francisco and Berkeley, we will have regular

meetings each month in both places.

In general, the San Francisco meetings will be the second Thursday of the month, still at the Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way, San Francisco, CA 94114, 415-554-9600.

The Berkeley meetings will be the third Thursday of the month, still at

the Northbrea Community Church, 941 The Alameda, Berkeley, CA, 510-526-3805. There are a couple of exceptions, so check the dates and locations carefully.

The schedule will be:

**September 13**  
**September 20**  
**October 11**  
**October TBA**  
**November 8**

**November 15**  
**December**

**January 10**  
**January 17**

**February 14**  
**February 21**

**March 14**  
**March 21**

**April 11**  
**April 18**

**May 8**  
**May 15**

Randall Museum, George Peyton: slide show on East Africa

Northbrea Community Church, George Peyton: slide show on East Africa

Muir Woods, Mia Monroe and Paul Heady: Bats!

(to be announced), Site TBA, George and Paul Matzner, Nature Sound Society

Randall Museum, George Raiche: Digiscoping (using a digital camera and spotting scope together to take pictures)

Northbrea Community Church, Eleanor Briccetti: slide show on Pribilof Islands of Alaska

No meetings, please sign up for one of the Christmas Bird Counts

Randall Museum, TBA

Northbrea Community Church, Ted Pierce: 20,000 years of Bird Illustration

Randall Museum, program TBA

Northbrea Community Church, program TBA

Randall Museum, program TBA

Northbrea Community Church, program TBA

Randall Museum, program TBA

Northbrea Community Church, program TBA

Strybing Arboretum, program TBA

Northbrea Community Church, program TBA



# Joe Morlan's Fall 2001 Birding Classes

Evening bird classes taught by Joe Morlan and endorsed by **Golden Gate Audubon Society** will be starting September 5, 6, and 11, 2001. All classes meet 7-9:15 p.m. in room 222, Marina Middle School, 3500 Fillmore at Bay St. Free parking is in the school lot off Bay St. on the east side of the building.

The instructor is co-author of *"Birds of San Francisco and the Bay Area"* and *"Birds of Northern California."* He is also coordinator of the recorded "Northern California Birdbox" sponsored by Golden Gate Audubon Society. Slides illustrate all lectures, and the text for all classes is *"A Field Guide to Birds of North America,"* third edition, by the National Geographic Society.

• **Field Ornithology I** meets on Tuesdays. It is an introduction to birds and birding, combining basic field skills with the study of bird ecology, biology, evolution and behavior. Part A (**EA101**) starts September 11 and ends October 23; Part B (**EA105**) is a continuation of Part A. It begins October 30 and

ends December 11.

• **Field Ornithology II** meets on Wednesdays. It is a continuing in-depth study of the identification and status of North American water birds, including gulls and terns. Part A (**EA110**) starts September 5 and ends October 17; Part B (**EA115**) starts October 24 and ends December 12.

• **Field Ornithology III** meets on Thursdays. It is a continuing study of North American birds including blackbirds, finches, loons, and grebes. Part A (**EA120**) starts September 6 and ends October 18; Part B (**EA125**) starts October 25 and ends December 13.

The instructor may arrange optional field trips on weekends. Please bring binoculars and field guides to class if you have them. Fees are \$115 for each seven-week course. Pre-registration is strongly advised. For further information call (415) 561-1860.

For additional information see the official City College Ornithology class site at <http://fog.ccsf.cc.ca.us/~jmorlan/index.htm>.

## Thanks to ScopeCity

The Golden Gate Audubon Society and its Latin America Committee wish to thank the people at ScopeCity, and in particular its manager Sam Sweiss, for their generosity and willingness to sell us six pairs of good quality binoculars at a generous discount.

These binoculars will be used in our Latin America program, which among other positive projects, sends binoculars to countries in the Americas. These binoculars are used to strengthen basic research, to help support national park rangers in their important (and severely under-funded) duties and to provide help with environmental education for both children and adults.

If you are looking for binoculars or scopes you may want to drop by ScopeCity at 350 Bay Street in San Francisco.

Again, our thanks to the fine folks at ScopeCity

## Donations

**Golden Eagle (\$1,000 or more)**  
Margaret Seely

**Least Tern (\$200 or more)**  
Mary Schaefer

**Clapper Rail (\$100 or more)**  
Mary C. Bellach for the Least terns and Save the Quail, Travis Hails, Regina Phelps/Emergency Management & Safety Solutions, Ann Smulka and Robert Blackburn

**Gifts (to \$99)**  
Hannelore and Robert Lewis, Rebecca

Miller, Shirley Osher, Patricia Greene, Ruth Dean, Ellen Frank (with a special thanks for all the great bird walks), Audrey Tast, Jean Thomas, Karen and Thomas Boyden, Cheryl Perkins, Jacqueline Craig, and Ed Marley

### In Memorium

Madge Dimmick in memory of **Jean Barnes**

**Special thanks to** the Dmarlou Foundation for a grant of \$6,000 to GGAS for the restoration of the Quail habitat in Golden Gate Park. The

award was made in the memory of **Martell and Dorothy Kaliski**.

And a special thanks to **Richard Bachenheimer** for a generous donation of \$3,500.

A bequest to the Golden Gate Audubon Society helps make it possible for us to continue the good work we do in helping to preserve our natural world for future generations. If you are interested in setting up a bequest we have a team of experts who will be glad to help you. Please call Arthur Feinstein at our GGAS Office for more information. Our phone number is 510-843-2222. Thanks.



The end of April brought wind and heat, alternating with cool, foggy days throughout the period. Most all of the wintering species have disappeared and 4 CBRC review species visited Northern CA. An unusually large influx of interior species into coastal areas occurred, notably the White-faced Ibis.

## Albatross to Ducks.

A Laysan Albatross as well as some Black-footed Albatross were reported on a May 6 MTY Bay PT (DLSh), while 3 other Black-footed Albatross were off Pt. Pinos, MTY, May 2 (Don Roberson). A Murphy's Petrel was spotted on a Bodega PT May 11 (DLSh). The MTY PT also had Pink-footed and Flesh-footed Shearwaters (DLSh). The first known SCZ county nesting record (fide DSu) for the Double-crested Cormorant occurred at Pinto Lake, May 18 (WM). The period was outstanding for Ibis records. First, there were many sightings of White-faced Ibis near the coast, often in substantial flocks, with high counts of 60 at MacKerricher SP, MEN, May 27 (DT), 51 at Pt. Reyes Station, MRN, May 23 (KH), 50 over Coyote Creek, SCL, May 19 (MM), 42 at Moss Landing, MTY, May 21 (RiF, TG), and still others in ALA, SCZ, SON, and SOL counties. More amazing was the identification of an alternately-plumaged adult **Glossy Ibis** (*Plegadis facinellus*) among a flock of White-faced Ibis in Alviso, SCL, May 14-15 (CI, MR, MM, DG). To date, there are no accepted CA records for the species, although there are some pending records from Southern CA. The Glossy Ibis is normally found on the Atlantic coast and throughout Florida and along the Northeast Gulf of Mexico. What was most likely the same individual was then seen with

17 White-faced Ibis at Hayward Regional Shoreline, ALA, May 20 (SJ, PD, BR), and with 26 White-faced Ibis at Coyote Hills RP, ALA, May 21 (BR).

At least 10 of the banded, released California Condors were seen at the beach near Julia Pfeiffer-Burns SP, MTY, Apr. 28 (JH, GSC). Four Greater White-fronted Geese were at Crescent City, DN, Apr. 29 (MM). A Snow Goose remained at Sunnyvale Sewage Treatment Plant, SCL, Apr. 29-May 16 (KD, MM), and a Ross's Goose remained at Crespi Pond, Pacific Grove, MTY, May 3, a late date for the species there (DR, PR). Unusual for the location were 51 Brant at AMSP, MTY, May 28 (SRv). Eurasian Wigeon reports were few, with two at Beatrice, HUM, Apr. 26 (GB), and one at Crescent City, DN, Apr. 29 (MM). Unusual in mid-May was a male Blue-winged Teal at San Lorenzo Park, SCZ, May 13 (DSu). A Harlequin Duck was still at Monterey Harbor, MTY, Apr. 29 (MEz), and another was seen at King Salmon, HUM, Apr. 30 (BW). Three Oldsquaws were found at Crescent City, DN, Apr. 29 (MM). One late female Bufflehead was reported at a pond on the 17 Mile Drive, MTY, May 27 (DR, RiC), and a late Hooded Merganser female was at Sunnyvale Baylands, SCL, May 17 (AGi).

## Raptors to Alcids.

Unusual for a city environment was a pair of White-tailed Kites nesting in a residential area in east Berkeley, ALA, May 17 (LT). The Bald Eagles at Del Valle RP, ALA, may have moved their nest site outside the park boundaries, as evidenced by food-carrying activity May 23 (PG). A Swainson's Hawk flew over Hawk Hill, MRN, Apr. 30 (SB). The first Northern CA record of a Zone-tailed Hawk occurred at Bolinas, MRN, May 7 (PP), and what was apparently the same bird was at

BSOL, AMSP, MTY, May 10 (CH). Five Solitary Sandpipers were found during the period: at Chesbro Reservoir, SCL, Apr. 28 (JM, AV, JD, MOB), at Beatrice, HUM, Apr. 26 (GB), at Crissy Field, SF, May 4-5 (ASH, DA, HC, MOB), at Pescadero Creek, SM, May 6 (RSTh), and near Clear Lake, LAK, ~May 20 (JeW). Several coastal observations of Wilson's Phalarope were reported, one at Crissy Field Lagoon, SF, May 5 (ME, HC), 2 on Teal Pond, PRNS, MRN, May 7 (RS), and 8-11 at Moss Landing, MTY, May 21 (RiF, TG). Single Red-necked Phalaropes were seen on Spreckels Lake, GGP, SF, May 6 (BS), and at Sutro Baths, SF, Apr. 30 (HF), with 12 others at Salt Pond A16, Alviso, SCL, May 16 (MM). A Long-tailed Jaeger was found on the May 6 MTY Bay PT (DLSh). Single Laughing Gulls were at Bracut, HUM, May 7 (RH), and on Humboldt Bay, HUM, May 9 (RH).

Two Franklin's Gulls were near Hwy. 1 and Dimeo Lane, SCZ, Apr. 29 (DSu), and two others were at Drake's Beach, PRNS, MRN, May 6 (RS). The Arctic x Forster's Tern that fledged in 1999 may have returned to the Hayward Regional Shoreline, ALA, May 14-20 (BR), and 3-5 pairs of Least Terns returned to the islands near Pt. Isabel, CC (ES). Two Black Terns on Clear Lake, LAK, were a first county record May 20 (JW). Black Skimmers continue to be reported, with 2 at Arzino Ranch, SCL, Apr. 29 (MR, GHo, MM, DS), up to 9 at Charleston Slough, SCL, Apr. 29-May 27 (MR, GHo, MOB), 2 over Schwan Lake Beach, SCZ, Apr. 30 (CE), 2-5 at the Hayward Regional Shoreline, ALA, May 7-20 (BR, (SJ, PD), and 2 others at the Pajaro River mouth, MTY, May 11 (RiF). Two Marbled Murrelets possibly nesting in Henry Cowell Redwoods SP, SCL, May 7, are the first modern sightings of that threatened species in



the San Lorenzo R. watershed (DSu).

### Owls to Flycatchers.

A Flammulated Owl recorded near Summit Springs, LAK, May 26, may be a 5<sup>rd</sup> county record (JeW). Black-chinned Hummingbirds were at their usual locations on Bethel Island Rd., CC, Apr. 24–May 24 (FB, SG), another was netted /released at CCFS, SCL, May 5 (LC), and there was also a Black-chinned Hummingbird at CCFS, SCL, May 11 (BRe, FV). The Costa's Hummingbird first reported Apr. 24 was still on Berkeley Way in Berkeley as of May 28 (ES, BoB, BaB, MOB). Costa's Hummingbirds were seen at 4 other locations, with 1–3 at Del Puerto Canyon Rd., STA, Apr. 26–May 23 (JC, FB, MM, MOB), with single birds at Garrapata SP, MTY, May 13 (JeD), at Soquel Demonstration State Forest, SCZ (RW), and off Long Ridge Rd., SCZ, May 22 (CR). A Calliope Hummingbird at Garrapata SP, MTY, May 13 was the latest spring record for Big Sur (JeD) and there was another at Soquel Demonstration State Forest, SCZ, May 15 (DSu).

There were nice records for *Empidonax* species during the period. Individual Hammond's Flycatchers were found at Arcata, HUM, Apr. 25 (DF), at Santa Rosalia Mountain, SCZ, Apr. 27 (DSu), at Mt Davidson, SF, May 4 (PS), and at Meder Canyon (county unknown) May 16 (JGi), while there were 4 at Mitchell Canyon, Mt. Diablo SP, CC, May 5 (JT), and others near Cedar Camp, LAK, May 26 (JeW). Single Gray Flycatchers were seen at Basalt Campground, MER, Apr. 26 (JSt), near the Legion of Honor, SF, May 5 (BF), at Mitchell Canyon, Mt. Diablo SP, CC, May 5–8 (JT), at Soquel Demonstration State Forest, SCZ. (RW), and a 2<sup>nd</sup> record for LAK county occurred in Snow Mountain

Continues on page 10

## Wood Warbler Sightings

### Golden-winged Warbler

May 25 Farallones, SF PRBO

### Nashville Warbler

Apr. 21 Blue Lake, HUM JP

Apr. 26 Sulphur Springs Trail, SCZ DSu

Apr. 27 Santa Rosalia Mountain, SCZ DSu

Apr. 28 Guadalupe Reservoir, SCL JM, AV, JD, MOB

Apr. 29 Grant Park, SCL JY

Apr. 29 Colorado Creek, SCL MR

Apr. 29 Mt. Hamilton Rd., SCL LBG

### Northern Parula

Apr. 25–9 La Honda Rd., SM RSTh, RFr

May May 4 East Wash, SF HC

May 4 Cull Canyon Regional Recreational Area, ALA KHi

May 7 (2) BSOL, MTY JS

May 10 Big Sur River mouth, MTY RiF

May 12 West Wash, SF HC

May 13 Fish Docks, PRNS, MRN CLi

May 15 Bear Valley Rd., PRNS, MRN ES

May 18–19 (2) BSOL, MTY JS SRv

May 23 Fish Docks, PRNS, MRN JT

May 24 Middle Lake, SF HF

May 28 L. Merced, SF JW

### Palm Warbler

May 14 Coyote Point CP, SM RSTh

### Blackpoll Warbler

May 14 Farallon Islands, SF PRBO

### Black-and-White Warbler

May 7 Mt. Davidson, SF EP

May 14 Farallon Islands, SF PRBO

May 17 Mt. Davidson, SF PS

### American Redstart

May 16 Soquel Creek, SCZ DSu

### Prothonotary Warbler

May 26 Pescadero Creek, SM RSTh

### Ovenbird

May 14 Farallon Islands, SF PRBO

May 18 BSOL, MTY JS

May 19 Soquel DSu

May 22 PRNS, MRN, JiW

May 22 Lighthouse

### Northern Waterthrush

Apr. 21 Willow Creek, HUM SP

May 7–21 Pescadero Creek, SM RSTh

### Hooded Warbler

May 14 Farallon Islands, SF PRBO

May 16 Grinnell Drive, Davis, YOL MP

May 18 BSOL, MTY JS

**Abbreviations for Observers:** IA, Tim Amaral; DA, David Armstrong; SB, Steve Bauer; FB, Florence Bennett; VB, Vicky Birdsall; GB, Gary Bloomfield; BB, Bill Bousman; BaB, Barbara Brandriff; BoB, Bob Brandriff; RC, Richard Carlson; RiC, Rita Carratello; LC, Les Chibana; JC, Judi Cooper; HC, Hugh Cotter; JD, Jim Danzenbaker; JeD, Jeff Davis; GD, Gary Deghi; KD, Karen DeMello; PD, Peter Dramer; JuD, Judith Dunham; ME, Mark Eaton; AE, Al Eisner; CE, Chris Emmons; MEz, Mike Ezekiel; RE, Rich Ferrick; BF, Brian Fitch; DF, Dave Fix; RiF, Rick Fournier; RoF, Rob Fowler; RFr, Roland Franz; HE, Harry Fuller; JG, Jim Gain; DG, Don Ganton; AG, Arlene Gemmill; AGi, A. Gibb; JGi, James Gilroy; SG, Steve Glover; PG, Phil Gordon; LBG, Leda Beth Gray; TG, Tom Grey; KH, Keith Hansen; JH, Jean Harrison; HH, Hugh Harvey; GH, Garth Harwood; RH, Rob Hewitt; BH, Bill Hill; KHi, Kevin Hints; CL, Craig Hohenberger; ASH, Alan S. Hopkins; GHo, Grant Hoyt; CL, Chris Illes; AJ, Al Jaramillo; SJ, Sheila Junge; RK, Richard Keohn; TK, Tracy Klein; EL, Earl Lebow; CLi, Cindy Lieurance; CL, Calvin Lou; WM, Wayne Macon; MM, Mike Mammoser; MOB, Many Observers; JM, John Mariani; TM, Tristan McKee; MPRBA, Monterey Peninsula Rare Bird Alert; MMo, Mark Morrisette; DN, David Nelson; KN, Kristi Nelson; SP, Steve Paliughi; MP, Michael Perone; KP, Kenneth Peterson; PRBO, Point Reyes Bird Observatory; JP, Jude Power; EP, Eric Preston; PP, Peter Pyle; CR, Cheryl Rapp; BRe, Bob Reiling; BR, Bob Richmond; DR, Don Roberson; MR, Mike Rogers; PR, Peggy Rogers; PhR, Phila Rogers; SRv, Steve Rovell; PS, Paul Saraceni; JS, Jason Scott; DLSH, Debra Love Shearwater; GSC, George St. Clair; RS, Rich Stallcup; JSt, John Sterling; MS, Michael Stevenson; AS, Andy Stone; DS, Dick Stovel; ES, Emilie Strauss; BS, Bill Strong; DSu, David Suddjian; SS, Sylvia Sykora; RSTh, Ron S. Thorn; JT, Jim Tietz; DT, Dorothy Tobkin; LI, Larry Tunstall; FV, Frank Vanslager; AV, Ann Verdi; LV, Lucille Vineyard; JeW, Jerry White; JiW, Jim White; BW, Bud Widdowson; DW, Dick Wiesner; JW, Jay Withgott; RW, Roger Wolfe; JY, James Yurchenco.

**Abbreviations for Counties and Others:** ALA, Alameda; AMSP, Andrew Molera State Park; BSOL, Big Sur Ornithology Laboratory; CBRC, California Bird Records Committee; CC, Contra Costa; CCFS, Coyote Creek Field Station; DN, Del Norte; GGP, Golden Gate Park; HUM, Humboldt; LAK, Lake; MEN, Mendocino; MRN, Marin; MER, Merced; MTY, Monterey; OSP, Open Space Preserve; PF, Pelagic Trip; PLA, Placer; PRNS, Point Reyes National Seashore; RP, Regional Park; SF, San Francisco; SM, San Mateo; SCL, Santa Clara; SCZ, Santa Cruz; SIS, Siskiyou; SOL, Solano; SON, Sonoma; STA, Stanislaus; SP, State Park; YOL, Yolo.

## Observation...

Continued from page 9

Wilderness Area May 26 (JeW). Six individual Dusky Flycatchers were identified: at Mitchell Canyon, Mt. Diablo SP, CC, Apr. 30 (JT), near Skyline Blvd., SM, Apr. 25 (RSTh), at Dinosaur Point, MER, Apr. 26 (JSt), at Big Sur Headlands, MTY, May 7 (JS), at the Farallones, SF, May 14 (PRBO), and at L. Pillsbury, LAK, May 20 (JeW). The persistent Tropical Kingbird was at Buffalo Paddock, GGP, SF, as of May 14 (CL, DN, MOB), and was also seen at Middle Lake, SF, May 11 (AG). Several Cassin's Kingbirds were seen away from their normal inland locations, including 2 on San Felipe Rd. near Hwy. 152, SCL, Apr. 30 (MM), 1 near Gazos Creek/Cloverdale Rds., SM, Apr. 28 (RSTh), 4-5 on Del Puerto Canyon Rd., STA, May 5-8, (ME) including a possible first breeding record for the county (MM). Another coastal Cassin's Kingbird was identified at Castroville, MTY, May 28 (RiF). A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher visited Sea Ranch, MEN, May 14 (RK) and an Eastern Kingbird was near the F Ranch, PRNS, MRN, May 15 (ES).

### Vireos to Finches.

Vireos were very much in the Northern CA birding news this May. Two sightings of the White-eyed Vireo (*Vireo griseus*) were made: at Pescadero Creek, SM, May 6 (RSTh), at AMSP, MTY, May 16 (JS). This species normally resides in the Southeastern US, with a range that overlaps the Yellow-throated Vireo. According to Small, 1994, it is a very rare spring transient in our state, with most records from Southern CA. Interestingly, the Yellow-throated Vireo (*Vireo flavifrons*) was also seen in 4 locations: along Coyote Creek, south San Jose, SCL, May 13-15, a 1<sup>st</sup> county record (MM, AE, BB), near the Visitors' Center, PRNS, MRN, May 15 (RS), near BSOL, MTY, May 19 (SRv), and at Lee Vining Creek, MON, May

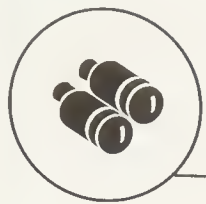
25 (KN). This spring transient is exceedingly rare in coastal Northern CA and in the northern interior (Small, 1994). Two Red-eyed Vireos also appeared on the scene, at the Fish Docks, PRNS, MRN, May 13 (ES) and at Mt. Lick, GGP, SF, May 21 (ASH). Unusual was evidence of nest-ing Pygmy Nuthatches on the Selby Trail, Tilden Park, CC, ~May 13 (PhR). Uncommon Wood Warblers increased this month (see Chart), with the most interesting a Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*), a bird of the Eastern U.S. that breeds around the Great Lakes and is declining over its range compared to its sibling species, the Blue-winged Warbler. It is a very rare spring transient, with only about 2-3 annual records, mostly from Southern CA (Small, 1994).

Three Summer Tanagers were reported: at the Fish Docks, PRNS, MRN, May 15 (ES), at East Wash, SF, May 21 (ME, RF, ASH), and at Pine Point Area, MRN, May 27 (MS). The Farallones, SF, hosted a Clay-colored Sparrow May 14 (PRBO), and there was a Brewer's Sparrow at Mt. Davidson, SF, May 18 (PS). Two Black-chinned Sparrows were found at the CCFS, SCL, Apr. 29 (MR, GHo, MM, DS), and another was at Monte Bellow OSP, SM, May 21 (GH). Visiting White-throated Sparrows still lingered, with one in Oakland, ALA, Apr. 26 (SS), another at the Carmel R. mouth, MTY, May 1 (BH), and a third in the Hayward Hills, ALA, Apr. 29 (KHi). The period had 7 reports of single Rose-breasted Grosbeaks: near Boulder Creek, SCZ, May 9 (DSu), near BSOL, MTY, May 10 (CH), at Mt. Davidson, SF, May 20-24 (PS), at a feeder in Scotts Valley, SCZ, May 21 (VB), near Carmel Highlands, MTY, May 27 (RoF, TA), at Tahoe City, PLA, May 27 (RC), and in San Gregorio, SM, May 25 (GD). A nice number of

Blue Grosbeak sightings also occurred, with up to 4 at their usual location on Del Puerto Canyon Rd., STA, Apr. 26-May 23 (FB, JC, JG, MOB), single birds at Olive Springs Quarry, SCZ, May 3 (DSu), at Patterson Pass Rd., ALA, May 7 (HH), at Ed Levin Park, SCL, May 15 (AE), at the Nunes Ranch, PRNS, MRN, May 23 (ES), and others at Bethel Island, CC, May 24 (SG). Adding to the spring color were six reports of individual Indigo Buntings, at Westhaven, HUM Apr. 26-27 (LV), near Coffee Lane Park, MTY, Apr. 30 (AS), at Spring Ridge Trail, Windy Hill, SM, May 15 (DW), at the Fish Docks, PRNS, MRN, May 13-15 (CLi, ES), one netted at BSOL, MTY, May 23 (MPRBA), and another at Windy Hill OSP, SM, May 19-29 (KP, GHo), where a supposed hybrid Indigo x Lazuli Bunting was also found.

A Dickcissel was at Happy Camp SP, SIS, May 4 (TK). Unusual near the coast was a Yellow-headed Blackbird at Arrowhead Marsh, ALA, Apr. 28 (JuD). There were also 3 Yellow-headed Blackbirds in a flock of Red-winged Blackbirds near Moon Glow Dairy, MTY, May 22 (RiF). Great-tailed Grackle incursions continued, with single birds at Heather Farms Park, CC, May 4 (HH), in Princeton, SM, May 15 (AJ), at Año Nuevo State Reserve, SM, May 14 (RSTh), at Harkins Slough, SCZ, May 20 (EL), at Swanton Road Pond, SCZ, May 22 (DSu), and at Lakeport, LAK, May 24, making a 3<sup>rd</sup> county record (JeW). A Baltimore Oriole appeared at Arcata, HUM, Apr. 21 (TM), and a Cassin's Finch, rare on the coast in spring, was seen at East Wash, SF, May 18 (ME).





## The Energetic Antics of Young Birds

**H**In the merry month of May my husband once again proclaims, "Are you sure we can't take these birds as dependents on our income tax?" The numbers of young birds crowding our various feeders becomes amazing. The first wave is the chickadee families—we have several. They raid the peanut feeder, the suet, the mixed seed feeder and the sunflower seeds. Shortly thereafter the nuthatch clan descends on the same feeders. At times an air traffic controller would be helpful as mid-air collisions become near-misses. The Oak Titmice are in abundance as well.

The acrobatic Acorn Woodpeckers swoop down upon the hanging feeder at the other end of the deck. The whole family, including last year's youngsters, is involved in keeping the babies in their colony supplied with food. The Nuttall's Woodpeckers drop by for suet regularly. Soon their babies will be begging the parents for an easy hand-out. House and Purple Finches crowd any feeder that is available and the Lesser and American Goldfinches barely move from the thistle seed feeder. Although late in returning this year, the Black-headed Grosbeaks will soon have youngsters vying for the black oil sunflower seeds. We're hard-pressed to keep seed on hand!

Since we live on a ridge, we also look down on birds, a unique perspective to be sure. Below us is a huge eucalyptus tree that has been a Red Shouldered Hawk's night time roost. I now suspect that there is a nest within the tree since there has

been a lot of action accompanied by piercing shrieks for months now. I would love to have X-ray vision! Perhaps when the young fledge we'll get to see the show.

A bird box which had been attached to a tree was blown down when we had those strong winds in April. Luckily, it was unoccupied. But a house-hunter had begun to build a cozy nest loosely-made of moss, soft dog hair and cotton batting flecked with bits of redwood bark. Most likely it was a Chestnut-backed Chickadee's nest. It was just dear—so much like the chickadees themselves.

During this month's unseasonably hot weather we have enjoyed watching the energetic antics of the young birds. They can be identified by wing-fluttering begging as their parents, who look smaller than the fat children, try to keep them fed. The chickadee babes have a much higher pitched peeping than the adults and they never seem to pause in their nagging for food. Eventually all the babies begin to imitate their parents and become adept at feeding at any type of feeder. Between bites of food they practice their air maneuvers and bounce around the branches, occasionally hanging upside down. Life is all fun and games for the young.

The White-breasted Nuthatches have shown the reason for their name. "Hatch" is an old word which means to "hack" open. And that's how they use their sharp bills.

After snagging a sunflower seed, they carry it to a nearby tree branch where it is placed in a niche and then

hacked open for the yummy seed inside. Several birds have decided to use a brick on the top of the chimney on which to hack. This must have been going on for years because the mortar is exposed! It must be an imitated behavior passed down to generations of neighborhood nuthatches.

Several species of birds use tools but the Brown-headed Nuthatch (found in the southern U. S.) is the only one to habitually use tools. It uses a piece of bark to pry up other bits of bark in search of insects. They actually carry a piece of bark from tree to tree before dropping it. However, who is to say that ALL nuthatches do not use tools—or at least ingenuity—to secure a good meal?

Even during the "dog days of summer", which occurred in May this year, there is much to be seen and learned while watching birds from the comfort of your deck chair.



## On The Inside

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